

**THE HERETIC; OR, THE GERMAN  
STRANGER. AN HISTORICAL  
ROMANCE OF THE COURT OF  
RUSSIA IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.  
IN THREE VOLUMES. VOL. I**

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The Heretic; Or, the German Stranger. An Historical Romance of the Court of Russia in the Fifteenth Century. In Three Volumes. Vol. I by Ivan Ivanovich Lajetchnikoff & Thomas B. Shaw

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**IVAN IVANOVICH LAJETCHNIKOFF & THOMAS B. SHAW**

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THE HERETIC.

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OR,  
THE GERMAN STRANGER.

An Historical Romance  
OF  
THE COURT OF RUSSIA  
IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN OF LAJETCHNIKOFF.

BY  
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IN THE IMPERIAL LYCEUM OF ПЕТЕРСКОЕ СЛОВО.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS,  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.  
1845.

THE HERETIC.





# THE HERETIC.

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## PROLOGUE.

"With the blessing of God, rejoice and hail, our good Lord and Son, Great Prince Dmitrii Ivánovitch, of all Russia . . . many years!"—*Words of the Primate at the ceremony of the Coronation of Dmitrii Ivánovitch, grandson of Ioánn III., as Great Prince.*

It was the 27th of October 1505. As if for the coronation of a Tsar, Moscow was decorated and adorned. The Cathedral of the Assumption, the Church of the Annunciation, the Stone Palace, the Tower Palace, the Kreml with its towers, a multitude of stone churches and houses scattered over the city—all this, just come out of the hands of skilful architects, bore the stamp of freshness and newness, as if it had risen up in one day by an almighty will. In reality, all this had been created in a short time by the genius of Ioánn III. A person who, thirty years back, had left Moscow, poor, insignificant, resembling a large village, sur-

rounded by hamlets, would not have recognized it, had he seen it now; so soon had all Russia arisen at the single manly call of this great genius. Taking the colossal infant under his princely guardianship, he had torn off its swaddling bands, and not by years, but by hours, he reared it to a giant vigour. Nóvgorod and Pskoff, which had never veiled their bonnet to mortal man, had yet doffed it to him, and had even brought him the tribute of liberty and gold: the yoke of the Khans had been cast off, and hurled beyond the frontiers of the Russian land; Kazán, though she had taken covert from the mighty hunter, yet had taken covert like the she-wolf that has no carth—her territories had melted away, and were united into one immense appanage; and the ruler who created all this was the first Russian sovereign who realized the idea of a Tsar.

Nevertheless, on the 27th of October 1505, the Moscow which he had thus adorned was preparing for a spectacle not joyful but melancholy. Ioánn, enfeebled in mind and body, lay upon his death-bed. He had forgotten his great exploits; he remembered only his sins, and repented of them.

It was towards the evening-tide. In the churches gleamed the lonely lamps; through the mica and blad-

der panes of the windows glimmered the fires, kindled in their houses by faith or by necessity. But nowhere was it popular love which had lighted them; for the people did not comprehend the services of the great man, and loved him not for his innovations. At one corner of the prison, the Black Izbá,\* but later than the other houses, was illumined by a weak and flickering light. On the bladder, which was the substitute for glass in the window, the iron grating, with its spikes, threw a net-like shadow, which was only relieved by a speck, at one moment glittering like a spark, at another emitting a whirling stream of vapour. It was evident that the prisoner had made this opening in the bladder, in order, unperceived by his guards, to look forth upon the light of heaven.

This was part of the prison, and in it even now was pining a youthful captive. He seemed not more than twenty. So young! What early transgression could have brought him here? From his face you would

\* *Izbá*—properly a cottage built of logs laid horizontally on one another, but anciently employed, generally, in the sense of "house." "Black Izbá"—a dwelling of the meanest kind; so called from the absence of a chimney rendering the walls black with smoke.—T. B. S.